

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-47 (Cancelled).

48. (New) A gaming apparatus which comprises (i) a stationary base; (ii) a wheel having a rotor rotatably mounted on a vertical axis with respect to the base, the rotor having pockets on its periphery into which a ball can be received with each pocket being associated with a number; (iii) a peripheral inclined surface concentric with the rotor for receiving a ball rollably thereon wherein the ball will roll into one of the pockets when the ball slows, the said surface comprising a circular, inclined ball track, disposed above, and radially outwardly of the rotor and (iv) a means to propel the ball along the ball track, each pocket having a hole in it and there being at least one air injection means which is connectable to the said hole so that a ball received in a pocket can be ejected from the pocket onto the peripheral inclined surface by air coming out of the hole.

49. (New) A gaming apparatus according to claim 48 wherein the air injection means comprises a nozzle connected to an air pump, compressor or a source of air at above atmospheric pressure.

50. (New) A gaming apparatus according to claim 49 wherein there are means to stop the rotor so that a hole in the pocket is aligned with the nozzle.

51. (New) A gaming apparatus according to claim 48 wherein there is a conduit leading from the air injection means to a hole in the pocket when the rotor is stopped.

52. (New) A gaming apparatus according to claim 48 wherein there is (i) a plate mounted below the rotor which is rotatable with the

rotor, which plate has a plurality of apertures through it with each aperture corresponding to a pocket and the air injection means is mounted below the plate and is located so it is sequentially aligned with each aperture as the plate rotates and (ii) conduits fixed to the upper surface of the plate, each conduit having one end connected to an aperture in the plate and the other end connected to the hole in a pocket so it provides an air passage from the plate to the pocket so that, when an aperture in the plate is aligned with the air injection means, air can be blown through the aperture in the plate, down the conduit to the pocket and so eject a ball from the pocket.

53. (New) An apparatus according to claim 48 wherein there is at least one ball detector means which can detect which pocket contains a ball.

54. (New) An apparatus according to claim 48 wherein there are means for propelling the ball along the ball track by giving an impulse to the ball as it is positioned on the ball track.

55. (New) An apparatus according to claim 54 wherein the means to give an impulse to the ball comprises at least one air jet positioned at the outer edge of the ball track which can direct a jet of air at the ball thus impelling the ball along the ball track.

56. (New) An apparatus according to claim 55 wherein there is at least one air jet directed to propel a ball in one direction around the ball track and at least one air jet directed to propel the ball in the opposite direction.

57. (New) An apparatus according to claim 55 wherein there is a rim fixed to the outer edge of the ball track and, in use, when

the ball reaches the outside edge of the ball track it is held against the rim by the action of centrifugal force and there are control means which operate the air jets to give an impulse or impulses of compressed gas to the ball in a single random blast of air or single puffs of air, and, after a predetermined time, the air jets can be turned off so the ball then spirals down the ball track to the contra rotating wheel.

58. (New) An apparatus according to claim 55 wherein there is a computer control means wherein the output from the ball detector means is fed to the computer control means and one or more of the motors or valves controlling the rotation of the rotor, the air injection means, the direction and rotational speed of the rotor, the means to propel the ball along the ball track, the random firing of the ball and control of its speed, the duration and random control of each spin and position of stopping of the rotor is controlled by the computer control means.

59. (New) An apparatus according to claim 55 wherein there are a plurality of ball stops uniformly located around the peripheral inclined surface.

60. (New) An apparatus according to claim 55 wherein there are solenoid controlled valves which operate to control the flow of air through the air jets and the air injection means.

61. (New) An apparatus according to claim 48 which is automatic and there are means whereby bets can be placed via slots or other similar mechanism using coins, notes or tokens and the wheel is spun automatically and there is a payout mechanism which can calculate the winnings.

62. (New) A gaming system which comprises a plurality of gaming

apparatus according to claim 48 and means to coordinate the operation of each of the gaming apparatus so that they can operate in a substantially synchronised manner.

63. (New) A method for launching a ball from a pocket in a gaming apparatus which comprises (i) a stationary base; (ii) a wheel having a rotor rotatably mounted on a vertical axis with respect to the base, the rotor having pockets on its periphery into which a ball can be received with each pocket being associated with a number; (iii) a peripheral inclined surface concentric with the rotor for receiving a ball rollably thereon wherein the ball will roll into one of the pockets when the ball slows, the said surface comprising a circular, inclined ball track, disposed above, and radially outwardly of the rotor, the method comprising directing an air jet at the ball from a hole in the pocket to eject the ball from the pocket.

64. (New) A method according to claim 63 wherein the air injection means comprises a nozzle connected to an air pump, compressor or a source of air at above atmospheric pressure and the rotor is stopped so that a hole in the pocket is aligned with the nozzle.

65. (New) A method according to claim 63 wherein there is a fixed rim positioned peripherally outward and at the top of the ball track and the ball is ejected from the pocket up to the rim.

66. (New) A method according to claim 63 wherein the ball is given an impulse to propel the ball along the ball track by at least one air jet positioned at the outer edge of the ball track which directs a jet of air at the ball thus impelling the ball along the ball track.

67. (New) A method according to claim 66 wherein there is a rim

fixed to the outer edge of the ball track and when the ball is ejected from a pocket and reaches the outside edge of the ball track it is held against the rim by the action of centrifugal force and the air jets are operated by a control means to give an impulse or impulses of compressed gas to the ball in single random blast of air or single puffs of air, and, after a predetermined time, the air jets are turned off so the ball then spirals down the ball track to the contra rotating wheel.

68. (New) A method according to claim 63 wherein the pocket containing the ball is detected by a ball detector means and the rotor is stopped so that the pocket containing the ball is in the correct position in relation to the means to propel the ball along the ball track.

69. (New) A method according to claim 66 wherein there is a computer control means and the output from the ball detector means is fed to the computer control means and one or more of the motors controlling the rotation of the rotor, the air injection means, the direction and rotational speed of the rotor, the means to propel the ball along the ball track, the random firing of the ball and control of its speed and the duration and random control of each spin and position of stopping of the rotor is controlled by the computer control means.

70. (New) A method for operating a gaming machine according to claim 66 wherein one or more means of the stopping of the motor, speed and direction of rotation of the rotor, the timing of the means for ejecting the ball from the pocket, the operation and duration of the means to propel the ball along the ball track are controlled by an operator.

71. (New) A method according to claim 66 which is completely

automatic, semi automatic or an operator controls operations such as starting the wheel, deciding when no more bets should be placed and starting the stopping procedure.

72. (New) An apparatus according to claim 48 which is a roulette wheel.